

379.743

V592

1846/47

*School District*  
*No 1*

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SECOND  
ANNUAL REPORT  
ON THE  
COMMON SCHOOLS,  
OF VERMONT,  
1847.

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ERRATA.—Some errors have occurred in the printing of this report owing to the fact that it was necessary to put some parts of it to press before the Superintendent could return the proof—while at the same time the manuscript had passed out of the printer's hands. The most prominent corrections required are the following:

Page 9—19th line, insert the word *that* before “the report.”  
7th line from bottom after “*models*” should have been a period:  
bottom line except one, for “acclamation” read *acclamations*.—  
Page 10—4th line, after “*illustrations*” should have been a period.  
Page 12—6th line from bottom, for “principal” read *principals*:  
12th line from bottom, for “uncharitable” read *uncharitableness*.  
Page 16—5th line from top, for “actually” read *gradually*: 2nd  
line of 2nd paragraph, for “standards” read *standard*: and next  
line, for “permanent” read *prominent*. Page 18—6th line from  
bottom, for “returns” read *results*. Page 25—12th line from top,  
for “on” read *or*. Page 28—2nd line of 2nd paragraph for “measure” read *measures*.

SECOND

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

STATE SUPERINTENDENT

OF

COMMON SCHOOLS,

MADE TO THE LEGISLATURE OF VERMONT,

NOVEMBER, 1847.

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ST. ALBANS, VT. :

E. B. WHITING, PRINTER.

1847.

RESOLVED, by the Senate and House of Representatives, That the State Superintendent and Clerk of the House be directed to procure 4000 copies of the Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools to be printed as soon, and on as favorable terms, as the same can be done, and distribute the same in the following manner, viz: twenty copies to the State Library; one to each member of the Legislature; two to each Town Clerk; one to each school district, Academy, and College in the State; four to each town and county Superintendent; and to such others as they may deem expedient.

IN SENATE, Nov. 10, 1847,

Read and adopted.

D. W. C. CLARKE, SECRETARY.

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Nov. 10, 1847,

Read and adopted in concurrence.

F. F. MERRILL, CLERK.

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NOTE. Town Clerks or Superintendents to whom copies are sent for distribution in their respective towns, will distribute them in accordance with the above Resolution, if a sufficient number of copies be sent; if not, a less number must be furnished to superintendents. A copy should without fail, be furnished to each district clerk.

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## REPORT.

### TO THE LEGISLATURE OF VERMONT :

The State Superintendent of Common Schools, in accordance with the provisions of "An Act relating to Common Schools, passed Nov. 5, 1845," submits the following as his second Annual Report :—

In presenting a history of our Common Schools for the past year, the Superintendent finds occasion for the indulgence of feelings both of solicitude and satisfaction. While the honor and security of the state, and the happiness of the countless thousands who in coming years shall successively constitute its citizens, are so deeply involved, as every intelligent and reflecting man must perceive them to be, in the measures which have been instituted for the advancement of popular education, it must be a question of momentous concern whether those measures are to be vigorously and perseveringly sustained, until our schools are raised to their proper position,—or whether those on whom must devolve the duty of urging on the work, shall grow weary of the toil, and falter while the good to be attained is yet so distant that it may fail to cheer them on. And hence no one can well bring his mind to a serious reflection upon the condition and prospects of this great and important interest of the State, without giving way, at times, to a feeling of deep and anxious solicitude.

Yet, on the other hand, there is in the operations and events of the year, room for satisfaction and hope—satisfaction that a foundation for future benefits has been laid and some good has been already gained—and hope, that an enterprize fraught with so much beneficence as that of providing a competent education for all the children of the commonwealth, cannot lack for fast and unfailing friends who, even though the good they aim at may not be so rapidly realized, nor its full attainment seem so nigh.



as the heart might desire, will still urge on the work with untiring energy and unflagging zeal.

It is a matter of deep regret that the efforts to collect statistics, for the past year, upon certain points relating to the condition of our common schools, have succeeded so imperfectly. The act of 1843, pertaining to this subject, requires of district clerks annually to make to the town clerks of their respective towns, returns embracing the names of heads of families; the names and number of children between the ages of 4 and 18 years; the number that have attended school during the preceding year; the length of time for which schools shall have been taught by male and female teachers, respectively; the amount of wages paid them, and the amount of public money received by the district. But this law, although still in force, has not been generally complied with. Either because they are unacquainted with these requirements, or for some other reason, district clerks, in very many instances, return nothing more than the names and number of scholars, with perhaps the names of heads of families. And in consequence of this failure to make full and correct returns, the selectmen are, in the first place, left without that information which they obviously must be possessed of, in order faithfully to comply with the provisions of the law, in their division of the public moneys belonging to schools. It is not, however, intended to make any comment here upon the effect of this delinquency, so far as its bearings in this respect are concerned.— But there is another evil growing out of the neglect in question, which is a greater one than would perhaps, at a hasty glance, be apparent. The State is deprived of that information which is so indispensably necessary to guide its legislation, in regard to the interests of our common schools. That accurate knowledge of their condition, which statistics so extensively aid in furnishing, is essential to a just appreciation of the wants of these institutions, and to a proper adjustment of measures to their actual condition. The value of statistical information is generally underrated by those who have paid little attention to the subject. The knowledge furnished by statistics is not a matter of uncertain opinion, varying according to the prejudices of the observer, or the varying phases under which the subject of ob-

servation may, at different times and under different circumstances, present itself—but is definite and demonstrative, fusing together favorable and unfavorable circumstances, and giving to them as a whole a fixed and certain character. It is a knowledge which has been made available to a greater or less extent for the advancement of all the great interests of humanity; leading to the adoption of measures which have promoted the physical, intellectual and moral welfare of society—measures, too, which could have rested on no other basis than that accurate information which statistics alone could impart.

The history of a single school, as isolated from all others, may, it is true, be a matter of comparatively little interest to the State, and of little importance to be known. But when the operations of that school are contemplated as forming a part of a great system of measures—when its history is regarded as an element in the aggregate history of an institution with which the highest interests of the State are closely and inseparably connected,—a history from which conclusions are to be drawn which must practically affect that institution and the interests connected with it—then the history of a single school assumes its true position and importance. And it is with such views of the value of statistics, and the usefulness of the purposes which they can be made to serve, that the Superintendent would labor to impress the importance of having them furnished from all our schools.

But the delinquency which has furnished occasion for these comments, produces another evil, which is incidental and subordinate, but which has more especially led the Superintendent to notice the general subject in the present connection. The failure of district clerks, in so many cases, to make complete returns, occasions hesitancy and delay in the collection and transmission of such information as is finally obtained. And attributable in no small degree to this cause is the fact that, while the reports of the County Superintendents are required by law to be made by the 1st day of September, only one half of the reports for the present year were received by the State Superintendent in the *month* of September, and some of the remaining half not until the second week of the present session.

It is doubtless true that in some instances there has been neg-

fect on the part of those whose duty it was to embody and transmit the information furnished originally by district clerks. But it is believed that in a majority of cases the delay has been occasioned by the fact that the original returns were incomplete—town clerks and superintendents hesitating to furnish information which was perhaps regarded as worthless because imperfect—or, it might be, losing time in a perchance fruitless effort to gather up deficient items.

But an apology for the failure of district clerks to make their returns in due form, may be found in the fact that these officers are not furnished with the acts of the Legislature by any specific provision, and hence could not be presumed to be generally acquainted with the requirements of the law in regard to their annual returns.

Aware of this fact, however, the superintendent, last year, appended to his Report a note, in which the duty of district clerks upon this point was stated; and as the State had provided for sending the report to every district clerk, it was hoped that the returns for the present year would, as a general result, be full and correct. But either from a failure of these officers to receive the report in season to be aided by it, in this respect, or from their failing to observe the note, which in fact was not presented in so prominent a form as would have been desirable, their returns were, nevertheless, so exceedingly defective, that the statistics drawn from this source are not more full than those given last year. A table of these statistics, marked "Table A." has been prepared; but it is so imperfect that any conclusions drawn from it cannot be implicitly relied upon. In regard to the item of expenditures for the support of schools, as given under the heads of wages paid male and female teachers, respectively, the returns are very incomplete, but such as they are they are embraced. The item of amount of public money received by districts is omitted, as no satisfactory returns on this point were received from more than two or three counties—not sufficient to form the basis of any conclusions or comments.

It had been the purpose of the Superintendent, if he should receive the full statistical information which he hoped to obtain, to prepare a table of it in detail, by towns; believing that such



a table would be not merely interesting to the curious, but very convenient and useful for future reference and comparison. But defective as the returns are, it was judged better to give them by counties only.

But the Superintendent is happy to say, that while his search for information in one direction has been so nearly fruitless, in another it has been more successful. The reports of teachers, although not received from nearly all the districts in the State, are yet definite, and so far as they cover the ground, afford information of a highly important character. Indeed so far as this report purports to give a history of the progress of our schools, it is based mainly upon the reports of teachers. The materials derived from this source are embodied in tables "B." and "C."

With these preliminary remarks, the Superintendent will proceed to state the present condition of our schools under several distinct topics—premising, however, that the exposition given in his last year's report, will still be taken as substantially correct and applicable, except so far as changes are pointed out.

## NUMBER OF DISTRICTS AND SCHOLARS.

The number of Districts in the State, as reported by superintendents, is 2646. From this it appears that the number has decreased since last year. At that time the number was estimated from returns received, comprehending 2276 districts, to be probably 2750 in all. This estimate may have been too high; but it is certain that the number is now actually less than last year—as the returns from many towns, purporting to be full and correct, show a less number than were returned from those towns last year. A reduction in the whole number of districts in the State, equal to one for every two towns, would more than make the difference between the number as estimated last year, and the number reported by superintendents the present year. In some towns, it is true, an increase in the number is exhibited; but these cases are few. It may not, however, be safe to assume that the whole number of districts has been returned

this year, and it is very probable that at least some of the fractional districts have failed of being reported.

The number of children in the State of legal school age was estimated last year at 100,000, making the returns received from 2276 districts the basis of calculation. The returns received this year from 2039 districts, in which the number of legal scholars is reported, give in those districts 74,770. Taking this as the proportion for the 2646 districts, we should have somewhat upwards of 97,000. But the probability has been already stated, that the complete number of districts had not been reported; and hence it would be safe to assume that the whole number of scholars exceeds 97,000—although it is now believed to fall short of 100,000.

The average number of scholars in the 2039 districts in which the number of scholars is known, is a fraction short of 37 to a district. For Chittenden County, however, the returns embrace only 53 districts, and these being in three of the largest and most densely populated towns of the county—Burlington among them—show an average of about 67 scholars to a district; which is altogether above the true average for the county. Omitting, then, this county in the estimate, or assuming its average to be the same as that of the remaining counties, we find the average for the State to be less than 36 to a district. Our districts are consequently yet quite too feeble to support efficient schools. It will be observed, on examining table "B." that the average length of schools for the year is less than 25 weeks in each of those counties in which the average number of scholars to a district is less than 36; and that it is only 20 or 21 weeks where the number is less than 33; while it exceeds 25 weeks in each county in which the average number of scholars is *above* 36, and is a fraction more than 26 weeks in each county where the average number of scholars exceed 38. Indeed the order in which the several counties stand in relation to each other, in regard to the average length of their schools, is in a remarkable degree parallel with their order in regard to their average number of scholars to a district. The greatest deviation is in the case of Lamoille County, which stands *seventh* in the length of its schools, while it is *eleventh* in its average number of scholars

to a district. It is however probable that these ordinals would have been approximated—the *seventh* being reduced to the *eight* place—if the average length of schools for Grand Isle County could have been given; and a similar approximation would, of course, have taken place in other cases. It is proper to observe in explanation of the table, that the order in which the counties are placed, in regard to the length of their schools, is drawn from the number of weeks as expressed with the proper fractions, which are omitted in the table. In most cases, the true number of weeks is a fraction less than the number set down.

Cannot a further reduction in the number of our districts, than has been noted, be effected—attended, as it would be, with a corresponding increase in the ability to support good schools? The population of Essex County is so sparse that small districts must be expected in that county; but cannot Caledonia, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Windham, and Windsor reduce their numbers? In the confident belief that such reduction would promote the interests of education in those counties, may we not hope that the trial will be made, and the report of another year will show that it has been successful?

## SCHOOL HOUSES.

In regard to this subject the superintendent has but little to report that would differ materially from the exposition given last year. It appears, however, that in many cases, these buildings have to a greater or less extent been improved in their condition in regard to neatness, comfort and convenience, and when new school-houses have been erected, during the year, they have generally been built upon improved models; some well planned and well constructed houses will be, for the first time opened for the accommodation of schools, the coming winter. The age of improvement in this respect, it is believed, has fairly commenced in Vermont; and well might some fifty thousand infant voice hail the ushering in of so auspicious an era, with acclamation of more than common joy.

## APPARATUS.

Under this head the Superintendent has the pleasure of reporting a decided increase since last year, in the extent to which schools are furnished with suitable apparatus for instruction, and illustration ; while the returns of last year indicated that less than half of our schools were furnished even with an article so indispensable to the school room, as the black board—indispensable at least, for the purpose of lucid, full and thorough instruction. It appears that this year, out of 1190 schools, from which reports on this point have been received, 1041 are furnished with this article. This exhibits, in the number of schools thus supplied, an increase from below 50 per cent to upwards of 87 per cent of the whole number, and there is no reason to doubt that this is near the true proportion.

And again, while last year, scarcely any apparatus for instruction beyond the black board could be heard of in the State, this year, out of 1190 schools reported 28—a small number, indeed, but an auspicious *beginning*—are represented as being furnished with some kinds of apparatus, such as globes, cubical blocks and the like, and 90 are reported to have maps or charts—probably in most cases outline maps. It is truly desirable that this work of supply should be extended much farther, but it is gratifying to know that it has commenced.

## TEXT-BOOKS.

Something has been done during the year by way of securing greater uniformity in the text-books used in our schools—and those too, of a better character. Still, this work has been progressing but slowly, and there yet exists a great degree of embarrassment in the operations of many of the schools, arising from the diversity of books. An attempt has been made to determine the



extent of the evil arising from this source, by ascertaining through the reports of teachers the number of classes in the schools, as an extensive division of a school into classes must be the necessary consequence of a multiplicity of text-books. But as different teachers have adopted entirely different modes of estimating the number of classes in their respective schools, no satisfactory conclusion could be drawn from the reports, relative to this subject. In a very large proportion of cases, the teacher appears to have reckoned as a single class any given number of scholars grouped together, however many branches of study they might have been pursuing in connection with each other; while the mode contemplated by the Superintendent, although not distinctly stated in the blank reports furnished to teachers, was, that any number thus classified should still be regarded as distinct classes, for every distinct branch of study they might pursue. Under the different modes of reckoning resorted to, the average number of classes in the schools appears to range from 10 to 16 in the different counties, while it is believed the true average would be nearer 20.

It is confidently believed by many of the friends of our common schools, that some measures more energetic than the mere recommendations of superintendents are necessary to secure the desired uniformity in regard to books, but should more decisive measures be deemed expedient, they would need to be carefully guarded, to prevent any undue exercise or abuse of the power that might be conferred. The Superintendent, however, cannot for himself as yet conclude that any other measures than those provided for, and in operation, are demanded.

## TEACHERS.

There can be no cause operating upon our schools that will exert more influence in promoting their advancement than an advance in the qualifications of teachers—no event in the history of these institutions that would afford so certain a pledge, that substantial progress is to be made, as the awakening of a deep and anxious interest among instructors to secure a preparation for their responsi-

duties. And upon this point, the evidence from different parts of the State is decidedly of a favorable character. The provision of the present school law requiring the examination of teachers has produced in this relation two distinct and marked results. In the first place, very many, who, under a system that allowed teachers to enter our schools without examination, and almost without their qualifications being thought of, would have offered themselves and found ready employment, because they could compete successfully with the best, have, under the present system of regulations, refrained from presenting themselves, and turned their attention to other pursuits. This standing back at the present time, from a consciousness of incompetency, might seem to reflect more credit upon their discernment, than their former readiness to engage in school, reflected upon their honesty. But on further thought we are led to enquire with what propriety can we charge dishonesty upon those who, even with a consciousness of their utter unfitness for the business of teaching, were still ready to engage in it?—Why should they have been expected to raise a higher standard of responsibility and attach a higher degree of importance to their teaching than the community who employed them? If the instruction they could impart was looked upon by parents as good enough for their *children*, with what good reason could we have looked to see teachers, bound to these young beings only by the *common* ties of humanity, calling in question the sufficiency of their instruction, and hesitating to yield it at the public call? Let us be cautious in judging them lest we expose *ourselves* to the charge not merely of uncharitable, but of gross injustice. We cannot exculpate ourselves in the matter, and the disposition of the case which would be the most favorable to ourselves, yet consistent with something like truth and justice, would be to set it down as a common sin—to tenderly call ourselves “participes criminis,” while really we were the principal in the wrong.

But to return from comments to results. It appears that the regulation making examination a prerequisite to teaching has had a favorable effect in securing to us a better class of teachers, independent of any rejections of candidates when subjected to this test—for such rejections have been but few. It is true

that instances have now and then occurred in which the applicant was adjudged unworthy to receive a license ; and one County Superintendent has particularly reported a case in which he rejected a candidate who pronounced the Mississippi the largest river in New-England, and alledged that our pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth 1847 years ago—with other facts in Geography, History and Chronology equally new and astonishing to learned men. We are not apprized that the candidate attempted to give any history of the manner in which the pilgrims were employed during the first sixteen hundred years of their residence in the country ; but it is suspected they must have been engaged in expelling the Bæotians from their territory. If so, however, it would appear that their labors had not been crowned with full and final success—as it seems that here and there a remnant of the race still lingers in the land. It is, however, due to truth to state further, that the candidate thus rejected, subsequently engaged in a school and taught without a license—having found a district that knew how to place a more exalted estimate upon his learning, and that could more highly prize such singular qualifications as he possessed than the superintendent was able to.

But the inculcation of error in all its multiplied forms, and especially its impression upon the tenacious memories of the young, is too serious a matter to be made the subject of a jest. Indeed the case would never have been thus made a matter of public comment, but for the particular fact that the candidate, subsequently to his examination and rejection, was employed in teaching, without a license. Ignorance is a fit subject for pity rather than ridicule, unless ridicule is necessary to repress its practical follies and confine it within its own proper sphere of action. And it is here proper to say, that although some other cases of gross ignorance in the candidates have been reported to the superintendent as a necessary means of informing him fully of the true state of things in regard to the qualifications of those who present themselves as candidates for teaching, yet, in accordance with obvious principles of delicacy and propriety, no such cases have been given to the public—and none will be—unless connected with circumstances like the present. If

adverted to at all publicly, it would be only in the form of general statements. It only remains to be remarked further, in this connection, that but few applicants of the stamp just described have presented themselves, and that the examination has done its work mainly by anticipation.

The other mode, in which examinations have exerted a beneficial influence, has been in their operating as an inducement to those who were preparing for this ordeal to make increased efforts to secure the desirable qualifications. The formation of teachers' classes in our academies and high schools; the establishment of Teachers' Institutes in many of the counties of the State; the opening of a Normal School; and the respectable extent to which teachers have availed themselves of these means of improvement, together with the attendance of many for this specific purpose in such of our high schools as do not propose to pay any special and distinct attention to the object of preparing teachers for their work—are all conclusive and important evidences that the work of improvement is going on. So that as legitimate results of our system of examinations—and that too without the exercise of any severity—we are not only securing as teachers those best fitted to be such in advance, but are also securing increased efforts on their part to reach a yet higher grade of qualification.

Nor, in fact, are these the only benefits in the way of elevating the standard of qualification among teachers that may fairly be ascribed to our system of examinations. There is an incidental benefit growing out of the process itself. Assuming that no better class of teachers presented themselves than were formerly found in this employment, and that the examination could not even induce the candidate to review the studies he expected to teach, yet the examination itself would be a process of instruction, and would serve as an occasion, of which the examiner might avail himself to communicate many profitable hints and suggestions.

But a result yet more beneficial is this. The mere fact, that the law is made to demand an examination, implies that there is in the public mind an importance attached to the business of teaching—that consequences of some moment are depending



upon the manner in which its duties are performed. This view of the matter is calculated to awaken in the mind of the teacher some thought and inquiry in regard to the proper manner of performing his duty, and to implant in his bosom a feeling of responsibility, which he could otherwise never have been expected to entertain. A work that appears in the estimation of the public so important must begin to appear so to him. And if no other good were to be derived from the system of examinations, still this calling into exercise the energies of the teacher's own mind, and this awakening of his soul to new promptings to fidelity in the discharge of his duties, would be attainments of untold value—far more than compensating for the paltry dollars and cents which it may cost to secure them. The Superintendent has no desire to represent the advancement which has been made in the character and qualifications of teachers as greater than it really is—nor would he by any means be understood to imply that there is no further room for improvement in this respect. He does not regard the advancement already secured to be so great and palpable as to arrest irresistibly the attention of the careless observer, much less of him who would avert his eyes; but he believes the progress made to be distinct and indisputable. While, however, he considers the value of teachers to have appreciably increased as a general result, he believes there is room for still further and greater attainments in this direction.

The Superintendent has dwelt much upon this point, because he regards an improvement in the qualifications of teachers as constituting the most important element in the great work of advancing the cause of education—and consequently as affording the surest indication that the enterprise of improving our schools is really and successfully progressing. It was remarked substantially in the Superintendent's report for last year, that aside from the lack of thoroughly qualified teachers, there were other evils which seriously impaired the usefulness of our schools; but while the incompetent teacher would be utterly overwhelmed with them, the well qualified would rise above them and still succeed in accomplishing the more substantial and useful purposes of instruction.

The truth of the sentiment uttered by the distinguished French statesman and philanthropist, M. Guizot—"as is the teacher so is the school,"—cannot be too strongly impressed upon the public mind. If the teacher's intellectual habits are slothful and inactive. The pupils will actually become so, if not so before. If the teacher fails to observe closely and think carefully, to see clearly and understand fully, the pupil will soon form the habit of doing the same. If the teacher is loose in his morals, vulgar in his language, or slovenly in his person, these characteristics will ere long be indelibly stamped upon the pupil. It cannot be expected that the child will rise above the standards set before them; for these will be continually drawing his eye and his attention downwards, even while some innate promptings, or occasional influences from other sources might be urging his thoughts and aspirations to a higher point of excellence. It is perhaps difficult to appreciate the extent to which the influence of the teacher determines the character and consequent destiny of those who look to them as their educational guide.

With such views the Superintendent cannot but feel a strong conviction that efforts to elevate the standards of qualifications for the duties of the instructor must constitute a permanent and important part of the great work before us. Under such impressions he has recommended to county superintendents to direct their attention mainly to the object of awakening in the minds of teachers a deeper sense of the importance and responsibility of their employment, and to put forth efforts to aid them in securing a better preparation for its duties, by way of meeting them in conventions, of establishing teachers' institutes, and of endeavoring to induce teachers to avail themselves of these means of improvement. It is believed that a given amount of labor would, in no other direction, tell so effectively in advancing the main enterprise.

This view of the subject suggests also the advantages which would be derived from a small provision being made by the State for the benefit of Teachers' Institutes, perhaps upon the plan on which appropriations are now made for agricultural societies. The support of these institutes is now a somewhat heavy burden of expense upon a few—mainly our su-

perintendents. It is scarcely to be expected that teachers, at the present low rates of compensation, should do much more than defray the expense of their own board and other incidental charges while attending them, without paying the necessary expense for lectures and instructors.

An appropriation of 75, or even 50 dollars a year to each county, for a limited period, it is believed would result in very great benefit to our schools. The Superintendent, however, does not feel himself called upon to press this subject upon the Legislature. He regards it as sufficient for him to exhibit facts as they come within his knowledge and point out their bearing, believing that when thus exhibited others can judge in reference to the action demanded, equally well with himself,

### TEACHERS' WAGES.

There appears to have been a small increase in the average amount of wages paid to teachers during the past year, as compared with the previous year. From the returns received last year, it was estimated by the Superintendent that the average amount paid to male Teachers was about \$ 12,00 per month, and to female Teachers \$ 4,75. This year the returns, so far as they extend, show an average of \$ 12,72 for male and \$ 5,32 for female teachers. But omitting the returns from Chittenden County, which, embracing only the three largest towns, do not exhibit a fair average for the county, we find the average for the several counties, (excepting Addison, from which no returns on this point have been received,) to be \$ 12,42 for male teachers and \$ 5,06 for female. The reports of teachers, which give the results of last winter's schools and exhibit the wages for the winter as distinct from the year, show an average of \$ 12,64 for male and \$ 6,74 for female teachers. These results may, at first thought, seem irreconcilable with each other; but it is to be borne in mind that the results first stated are drawn from the returns made to Town Clerks, and really have reference to the winter of 1845 and '6 so far as regards the wages paid to male teachers; and it is not improbable that the average may have increased for the

subsequent year, from \$ 12,42 to \$ 12,64, or even beyond this.— The average paid to female teachers, as appears from their reports of winter schools, should also excite no surprise, for it is well understood that the wages paid to females engaged in winter schools is considerably greater than the average paid them for the year.

It is, however, to be remarked that this average for female teachers is, nevertheless, probably stated too high. It is based upon the assumption that the average length of the schools taught during the winter by males was the same as that of females.— The actual amount of wages paid to a given number of female teachers being known, while no provision was made by the Superintendent for ascertaining the length of their schools in distinction from those taught by males, no other definite mode could be adopted for determining the average of wages, than to assume that their schools were of equal length. But the presumption is fair, that, female schools being cheaper, their average length was greater than that of the male school. And if so, the actual amount of wages given, as paid to females, was paid for a longer term of time than has been assumed, and the average as stated for female teachers must consequently be too high. But whatever amount is deducted from the given average for them, is to be added to that for male teachers. It is very probable that such a correction would raise the average amount of wages for males, to about \$ 13,00, and reduce that for females to less than \$ 6,40.

The wages of females for summer schools is, doubtless, considerably less than the average for the year, as before stated, which is \$ 5,32. Probably for the summer schools it will not exceed, and may not reach, \$4,50. And here it is proper to remark that during the session a considerable number of reports of summer schools has been received. But the Superintendent has not had time to analyze them and embody their results. This, however, he proposes to do at the earliest practicable period, and to give those returns to the public through the medium of the "School Journal."

In regard to the general subject of teachers' wages, the Superintendent would remark, that he has no desire to see the wages of teachers increased without a corresponding effort on their part to secure better qualifications; for we already pay for *poor* teach-



ers a price sufficiently high. But he does most earnestly and anxiously desire to see teachers, as a class, better qualified and better paid. And he can scarcely expect the gratification of witnessing the *first* result, increase of qualification, except in connection with the *last*, increase of compensation. An increase of wages without an increase of qualification might indeed take place, though it would be likely to be prevented by extended competition, in accordance with the common laws of trade. And these same laws would, with almost unerring certainty, prevent any considerable improvement in the qualifications of teachers, unless higher rates of compensation should furnish the inducement to secure them. But an increase of wages is not desired solely because it is a necessary prerequisite to the attainment of the higher purpose. It is right in itself that those who engage in so responsible an employment as that of the teacher, and who exert themselves to secure the proper qualifications previous to entering it, should receive for their labour a compensation proportioned to the responsibility, the magnitude and the importance of their work.

### AGE AND EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS.

The reports of teachers for the last winter have developed one fact that was altogether an unexpected one to the Superintendent. Last year no attempt was made to collect any statistics pertaining to the number of seasons for which the teachers, respectively, had been engaged in the business of teaching; and it was presumed that the average would not exceed two, or, at most, three seasons. But returns from 1190 teachers show an average of four and seven-tenths—the extremes for the several counties being 3.4 and 5.9. As this average is drawn from tables embracing those who were engaged for the first time in the business of teaching, as well as those who had been longest employed in it, it is proper to double the number expressing the average, in order to determine the average number of seasons for which those who once enter the employment, generally pursue it previous to their final relinquishment of the avocation. This would exhibit

the fact, which it is believed would be somewhat a matter of surprise to all, that they ordinarily follow this pursuit for the term of about *nine* seasons. And there is one very important inference to be drawn from this result. It is the additional importance which is to be attached to the purpose of securing to teachers a right preparation for a work which they are to follow for so long a time. And, in connection with this, a justification is afforded for increased efforts and greater expense to secure a special and thorough training for the vocation, in view of the fact that so small a proportion of our young men and women who pass the period of life appropriate to this pursuit ever engage in it, and that hence a special and thorough training for it, although attended with some expense, is yet demanded for comparatively but few.

The average age of teachers, so far as the reports extend, is found to be twenty-two years and four-tenths—the extremes in the counties being 21.1 and 23.7. Assuming that none of the teachers had taught more than one season in a year, the mode of determining the average age at which they commenced teaching would be to deduct, from the number expressing their average age, that expressing the average number of seasons they have taught; and this would give us 17 and 7-10ths. But as a considerable proportion of the teachers who have reported are females, who would be likely to have taught *more* than one season in the year, this number should be raised; and it is most probable that the average age, at which teachers enter upon their work, is somewhat upwards of 18 years.

No provision has been made for ascertaining the age of teachers for the coming year, because having been ascertained once, and its relations to the number of seasons taught by them having been determined, it may serve as a permanent basis for future calculation—not being likely to materially change. The number of seasons taught, however, it is still thought desirable to ascertain from year to year, because this may change. Any increase of it would, of course, imply a greater permanency in the employment of teaching, and might be regarded as a favorable result. Hence it is desirable to ascertain any progress in this particular, even though it be but small.

## ATTENDANCE.

The attendance upon winter schools is given for 1038 schools, and probably affords a very fair basis for an estimate of the whole amount of attendance in the State. Assuming this as the basis for our conclusions, it will appear that the whole number of scholars, who attended the last winter's schools for a longer or a shorter term of time, was equal to a fraction over 85 per cent of the whole number of children in the State, of legal school age. But of those attending school it is known that a considerable number are not of legal school age—some being under 4 years of age and others over 18—mainly the latter. The proportion of this class was estimated by the Superintendent last year at 8 per cent of the whole number attending school. He had, however, no returns that might serve as data for the estimate, and the proportion assumed was admitted to be a mere matter of conjecture. This year, however, statistics upon this point have been collected from 830 schools; and from these it appears that the true proportion of this class of scholars is just 7 and a half per cent of the whole number attending. From this it would appear that the number of children in the State of school age that were last year supposed not to attend school at all, was stated somewhat too high—some part of the attendance being supposed to be from scholars without, which was really from scholars within, the school age.

Making the necessary correction in the estimate for last year, we shall still find, on referring to the table of attendance for this year, that there has been, for the year, a decided improvement both in regard to the absolute number of those who have attended school, and in the regularity of their attendance.

A synopsis of the attendance for the last winter, similar to that given in the body of the last year's report, would give the following results—assuming the whole number of legal scholars in the State to be 100,000 :

No. that attended school	70 days or more,	9,722,
" " "	60 to 70 days,	20,412,
" " "	50 to 60 "	16,752,
" " "	40 to 50 "	12,487,
" " "	30 to 40 "	9,235,
" " "	20 to 30 "	6,534,
" " "	10 to 20 "	5,602,
" " "	less than 10 "	4,281,

Whole number attending,	85,025.
Deduct $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent not of school age,	6,377.

This leaves of legal scholars attending district schools, 78,648.

But to show the whole number of children who are receiving instruction, we should add 3 per cent of the whole number, which was ascertained by returns last year to be the proportion attending Academies, Select Schools, &c. This would give the following result :

In District Schools,	78,648.
In Academies, &c.,	3,000.
Which leaves, (to make up the 100,000,)	18,352,

who were not to be found the last winter in any school whatever ! This number is still sufficient to alarm us, although it has been considerably diminished since the previous year.

In regard to regularity of attendance, also, there appears to have been an improvement. Taking the returns, so far as they reach, as exponents for all the schools, it appears that, of the 85,025, the average constantly attending was 57,977 ; while in the ratio of last year's attendance the number would have been only 57,477. And, for reasons drawn from the difference between the modes of making the estimate last year and the present, it is believed that the improved attendance has been still greater than is here shown. And such a presumption would not be unreasonable, independent of the particular fact on which the conclusion is founded. The mere fact that a record of attendance was kept, has awakened in pupils, to a great extent, an anxious desire to be in school at what they termed the "Roll-call," and many an urchin has at night inquired of his teacher,



with earnest solicitude, whether he has received credit for his day's attendance.

Last year, the time lost directly, by irregularity of attendance, was somewhat over one-third of the whole time for which schools were taught—this year somewhat *less* than a third. But the improvement neither in this respect nor in regard to the numbers attending school—has yet been what it should be—what it *must* be.

### GENERAL IMPROVEMENT.

Aside from the evidences that a gradual improvement in our schools is going on, furnished by the statistical results already given, it appears from the reports of superintendents that an advancement is making in other particulars, in regard to which statistical tables and figures could afford us no information. A more extended feeling of interest on the part of Parents, a greater degree of neatness in the appearance of the school room, more system in the general arrangements of the school, improved modes of instruction, better discipline and management, and a more general awakening of mind and enlivening of interest, both on the part of teacher and pupil, are among those favorable indications which may be regarded as earnest of present, as well as future, good.

The Superintendent is aware that there are those in the State who aver that no improvement has been effected, and that all the labor and expense which have been directed to that purpose, have been bestowed in vain.

But he would simply inquire of such, in what direction they have looked for improvement? Have they searched in the right quarter or placed themselves in the proper position for observing it? Have they been in the school house and sought for it there?

### MODIFICATIONS OF PRESENT SCHOOL LAWS.

Some modifications in our school laws are very clearly demanded. In regard to some points there is an incongruity between their several requirements.

As a prominent example of this, the selectmen are required annually on the first day of March to make a division of the public school moneys upon a specified basis. And among other elements of this basis, they are to have reference to the length of time for which a school has been taught in each district at its own expense, "during the year preceding such division." Now the returns of district clerks, assuming that they are full and correct, do not necessarily enable the selectmen to judge correctly on this point, because these returns simply embrace the year previous to their being made, which is required to be in the month of January. Now, whether a school has, or has not, been taught with other than public moneys for two months during the year previous to *that* time, the reverse may be true as regards the year ending the first day of March.

The most convenient method of securing a corresponding year in the two cases might seem to be to have the returns of clerks made in the month of February, and to allow them to embrace such schools (with their expenses) as had been in good faith contracted for up to the first day of March. But there is a strong objection to the arrangement of having the school year commence on the first day of March. Many of our winter schools do not close until a somewhat later day, and it is very desirable that the winter school should not be embraced in part in the returns for two different years. The cases are very rare in which this inconvenience would be experienced if the 1st day of April were fixed upon as the commencement of the school year. And this seems to the Superintendent to be in all respects the most convenient period to fix upon. The public money might still be divided as now, on the 1st day of March, and district clerks might make their returns by anticipation, as already suggested, for the year ending on the 31st day of March. The Superintendent knows of no good reason why returns should be required, even under the present system, to be made in the month of January, inasmuch as the division of the public money is not made until March. If, however, for any sufficient reason, it should be deemed preferable to have the number of scholars taken as it stands on the 1st day of January, this might still be done, although the returns should not be made to the town clerks until

even the 1st day of March, and should embrace other statistics of schools up to the latter period. Under the arrangement suggested there would be no occasion for district clerks to report by anticipation to any great extent, as by far the greatest number of our winter schools close by, or soon after, the 1st of March, and many of them before.

Another modification which there are strong reasons for desiring, is a change of the basis of apportionment of public school money. It has long been apparent to those who have reflected on the subject, that a distribution having reference only to the number of scholars in a district without regard to the wants of the school on the application of the money for the use of schools, could not be sustained by any very valid argument unless it be that of convenience. This statement may, indeed, seem too sweeping, since there are conditions attached by law to the distribution, which under certain contingencies would have some reference to the wants of schools, instead of leaving the number of scholars in the district to be the sole consideration to be regarded. But these conditions as a general rule, are so utterly disregarded by selectmen, that but little is gained by retaining them on the statute book.

If instead of the present system of distribution, the attendance of scholars were made the basis, it would seem to be the preferable mode, for two reasons. In the first place, the principle would be right and equitable in itself; and in the second place, it would operate as a motive to secure a more general and more uniform attendance on our schools. The present system holds out no such motive. On the contrary, while the mere residence of a child in the district is sufficient to secure to the district in his behalf a distributive share of the public fund, the consideration that a reduction of the number of scholars in the school, tends to increase the privileges of those that do attend, would be operating as an inducement to parents that wished their children to enjoy the benefits of the school, to discourage a full and general attendance. And there are many parts of the State in which a motive acting in the opposite direction is urgently demanded.

Along the northern and to some extent the western borders of the State there is a very considerable percentage of the popula-

tion composed of foreigners who, placing no value upon our schools, instead of manifesting any desire to avail themselves of their benefits, rather suffer their children to grow up in ignorance and vice. Such a population growing up among us must of course be dangerous. The only practical mode of obviating the danger is to bring these children into our schools, and endeavor by educating them to assimilate them to our own people. And a distribution upon the basis proposed would stimulate districts to efforts to accomplish this purpose.

It is not, however, by any means exclusively for the cases just adverted to, that the suggested modification is demanded, or in which its influence would be salutary. Every part of the State, and all classes of our people, stand in need of some new impulse to efforts for securing a more full and punctual attendance on the school. And it is believed that no measure can be devised better calculated than that proposed to secure the contemplated object.

If it should be determined to make the attendance of scholars the basis of distribution of the public fund, it would of course be necessary, in connection with this regulation, to make provision that an accurate record of attendance should be kept by teachers, and that either the original record or an abstract from it, should be returned to the town clerk.

Aside from these more prominent changes proposed in our school system, there are some minor modifications which the Superintendent regards as desirable. If it is of any importance that teachers should be subjected to an examination, it is important that there should be some mode of securing a uniform compliance with the law which is now not unfrequently disregarded. It is true that the teacher cannot legally recover his wages if he has neglected to obtain a certificate of license. But as the district forfeits nothing by this failure on the part of the teacher, they will ordinarily be willing to pay him his wages which are drawn mainly, and perhaps wholly, from the public fund. And in this confidence he may presume to engage in his school without being examined. While if he were to be paid by a tax upon the district they would be more likely to take the forfeiture at his hands, and perhaps wholly refuse him his stipulated compensation.



In order to secure a motive to comply with the requisitions of the law on the part of *both* parties, it is necessary that the district, also, should forfeit at least some portion of its share of the public fund, or be subjected to some other penalty in case of employing an unlicensed teacher.

The neglect in many cases of candidates for teaching to present themselves for examination on the occasions publicly appointed for that purpose, is the source of much inconvenience which might easily be avoided. It operates as a burden either upon superintendents or upon the public—perhaps to some extent on both. If candidates were required to pay the expense when they present themselves for private examination, it would remove the difficulty in one way or the other; and such a requirement could not be regarded as unreasonable.

In his report for last year the Superintendent had occasion to offer some remarks upon that provision of the school law which requires each district to support a school two months at its own expense, as a condition of its receiving, for the year, a distributive portion of the public fund; and also upon the general neglect of selectmen to make any inquiry whether the condition has been met. In case the cost of board is reckoned as a part of the expense of schools—and it seems to have been the intention of the law so to regard the matter—it is probable that the law, although *disregarded*, has not actually been *violated*, in so many instances as may by some have been supposed. But whatever construction be put upon the law as it now stands, the Superintendent entertains the opinion that two months' school, including board in all cases as part of the expense of schools, is all that is expedient to require a district to support with its own funds under the compulsory influence of a forfeiture. To that extent it is believed that the law ought to be retained and enforced. But the Superintendent is still of the opinion that the forfeiture should not extend to the whole of the district's share of the public money, but only to some definite portion of it—perhaps one half.—But whatever construction is to be given to the requirement of two months' school at the expense of the district, it is important that the construction be fixed and understood, and the law enforced.

The Superintendent would further suggest the propriety of making some provision for granting State Certificates, or permanent and general licenses, to such teachers as may be found to merit them. Such licenses would be of value both as a guarantee of superior qualifications and merit, and as an exemption from the necessity of further examination, with the privilege at the same time of teaching in any part of the State. This would present a strong motive,—especially to those who have just commenced teaching and are intending to follow the employment for some length of time—to aspire to a high grade of qualification. And the privileges conferred by state certificates may be regarded as rewards, which are but justly due to superior excellence.

It seems to the Superintendent highly desirable that some more efficient measure should be devised and adopted for collecting the statistics of our schools. The importance of the information which they furnish can scarcely be overrated, as it must serve as the basis of all sound and well adapted Legislation in regard to the interests of education. And that same information which the State needs to guide it to judicious and proper measures is, to a great extent, needed by the selectmen of the several towns to enable them to comply with the law in the distribution of public moneys. They should know not merely the number of scholars in a particular district, but also the length of time for which a school has been kept, and the amount of wages paid, in order to determine whether the district has fulfilled the condition that it should support a school a given term of time at its own expense. So long, however, as selectmen are ready to make the division without this information, we cannot expect that district clerks will furnish it—certainly not, unless they are more generally informed of the requisitions of the law in regard to it.

Should the suggestion of making attendance upon schools the basis for the apportionment of public money be carried into effect, it will of course be necessary that teachers should make returns relative to this subject, and this information, being in the hands of town clerks, may be obtained from them for the use of the State. But in case no change in this particular be made, it seems desirable that a provision should still be made, by which

teachers should be required to furnish information in regard to the attendance upon their schools, and such other facts as it should be thought desirable to collect. Indeed, the advantage of keeping a record merely as an inducement to punctuality, is, as has already been suggested, amply sufficient to compensate for all its trouble.

It is due, however, as an act of justice to the teachers in the State, to say that they have, in most cases, where they have been furnished with blanks, promptly and freely responded to the request that they would keep a record, and make returns to the superintendents. This ready co-operation on their part, in the measures instituted for the benefit of our schools, is deserving of public commendation. And could the Superintendent enjoy the privilege of meeting in person those 1200 teachers whose returns for the last winter schools have been received, he would give full utterance to the gratitude which he feels for the favor they have done. And, it is proper to state further—and the fact may serve as a hint for the future—that it has been ascertained that in many cases returns were made out by teachers and deposited with individuals for delivery, but have failed to reach their destination. To what extent this has occurred cannot, of course, be known.

It is believed by many, that the present organization of our school system is too cumbrous and complicated, and, as a necessary consequence, too expensive; and as a mode of removing these objectionable features it is proposed to abolish the county superintendency. That the parallelism of duties which now exists occasions some want of harmony in the operations of the system, is admitted. And so, also, is the fact that the present greater number of officers than would be required under the simpler system suggested, occasions increased expense—though whether that feature in the system which involves this additional expense is necessary to effectually secure the desired improvement in the condition of our schools, is, of course, a different question. But the whole subject is one which deserves a serious and candid examination. The Superintendent believes the time will come when our county superintendency may safely be dispensed with. But in the present condition of things, he

would, under a town superintendency alone, despair of seeing any substantial progress made. Whatever of improvement might be ultimately effected, he would expect that its progress must, at all events, be so tardy that at least one generation would pass away before its benign influence should be appreciably felt. Indeed, if it were settled that one or the other class of superintendents must be dispensed with, and it were left with the Superintendent to choose between them, he would prefer that the *town* superintendency should be abolished, and the county superintendency, with certain modifications, retained. Such a system, it is believed, would be better adapted to our present condition, and be productive of more beneficial results, than that which it has been proposed to substitute for our present one. The reasons for these opinions are to be given; though it must be briefly.

But it is proper to state, in the first place, the modification adverted to, which would seem to be necessary, in case the office of town superintendent were abolished. And, meanwhile, even under the present general plan, it might well be questioned whether the modification to be suggested would not operate beneficially. The modification contemplated is, a division of the larger counties into two or three sections, with an increase in the number of superintendents,—so that no one should have under his supervision more than 100 or at most 150 districts. This would enable the superintendent to watch the schools under his charge with greater constancy and care—while at the same time, his labor, being brought within the compass of a smaller field, could be performed at less expense than it now can be; and allowing the rate of compensation to remain the same, an able and faithful discharge of the duties of the office would be more likely to be secured.

With this modification, at least, it is believed that a county superintendency would be more harmonious in its plans and operations, more effective and more useful than a town superintendency could well be rendered. The importance of erecting and maintaining a high standard of qualification for teachers; of bringing them together in conventions; of establishing and sustaining institutes; and, generally, of awakening in the minds of teachers a deep feeling of interest in their work, and of provid-



ing facilities for securing to them a proper preparation for it, will be generally acknowledged. And for the accomplishment of these great and important purposes the advantages of county superintendents are manifestly superior. Under a town superintendency alone, the efforts of one to raise the standard of qualification, might easily be thwarted, and would in fact be very liable to be, by the laxity and indifference of another. Even under the connecting and harmonizing agency of our county superintendency, the action of town superintendents is sufficiently diverse; and the evil would, doubtless, be still greater without this regulating power.

For the exertion of a beneficial influence upon teachers in the other modes named, aside from that just adverted to pertaining to examinations; it appears obvious that an officer is needed whose jurisdiction and supervision shall extend beyond the limits of a single town. And further, assuming that a given work is to be done, the opportunity for securing the requisite talent and efficiency, in addition to that familiar acquaintance with the duties to be performed which extended labor alone could ensure, is manifestly better if but two or three officers are to be appointed for a county, than if a much greater number is required.

As a mode of compensating, more or less perfectly, for the want of a county superintendency, it has been suggested that the sphere of the State Superintendent's duties should be enlarged, and that he should be authorized, by an adequate compensation, to devote himself exclusively to the duties of his office. But not to prolong remark, the Superintendent feels compelled to express it as his deliberate conviction, that in the present stage of our enterprise our county superintendency fills a place which, under any arrangement of a system embracing only a State and Town superintendents, could not be adequately supplied, and is indispensably necessary to any satisfactory progress in the work of improving our schools.

Among the minor amendments to our school-law which some have thought desirable, is one giving to superintendents the power of revoking their licenses. This regulation has been supposed to be demanded more especially in reference to cases in which the teacher has, upon trial, proved himself incompe-

tent to the proper government and management of his school. But it is believed that so long as licenses are available but for a single year, the proposed regulation would be not merely superfluous, but objectionable. The prudential committee of the district can dismiss an incompetent teacher from his school whenever they see fit, without his license being revoked. And if a difference of opinion in regard to the propriety of this measure, existed between the superintendent and the committee, would it not be clearly more suitable that the right of decision should rest with the latter? These officers should be left to feel that they have responsibilities and duties in the school, after the teacher has been employed.

It might, however, still be urged, that if the teacher had palpably failed, and even been dismissed, he might yet engage in another school, unless his license were re-called. But in the case of the male teacher, at least, his season for teaching would probably have gone by; and in *any* case, the reputation of a failure and dismissal would be likely to supersede any necessity for a revocation of the license.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It is important, in legislating for the interests of common schools and the cause of popular instruction, that the great and fundamental truth be kept distinctly and steadily in view, that Education is not a personal and private, but a public and common interest. If one has any dimness of perception upon this point, or entertains any hesitating doubts in regard to the substantial truth of the proposition, let him exchange the sense of personal security, the means of intellectual gratification, the refined social enjoyments, the provisions for his comfort in health and the kindly ministrations in sickness, which he enjoys in the midst of an educated, enlightened and virtuous community—for an abode in some barbarous land, where ignorance and debasement, and peril to person and life, must continually surround him. Such an exchange, we apprehend, would clear away all mistiness of vision, and dispel all lingering doubts. The experimenter would be likely to glean from it, in a very short time, a suffi-

ciently full and satisfactory conviction of the fact that he has a deep interest in the education of those around him.

The case which has been supposed by way of test, is, indeed, an extreme one; but extremes are often the most clear and conclusive tests of truth. The inference which we are to draw is simply, that just in proportion as the prevalence of popular ignorance shall be allowed to sink us down as a people from a position of intelligence and virtue and refinement, towards that state of degradation to which ignorance must sink us,—just in that same proportion must we approximate to that condition of privation and personal insecurity which has been supposed to be a necessary attendant upon untutored and uncultivated barbarism.—None of us, perhaps, can fully appreciate how intimately our interests and happiness are interwoven with those of the community around us, nor how accurately the measure of our means of enjoyment is determined by the prevailing character of the education which is moulding the institutions under which we live, and forming the character of those who are to be our companions on the journey of life.

But the question whether education is a public interest, and is to be the object of public care, has never really been an open one, in the history of Vermont. It has never from the earliest organization of the State, been left to communities, towns or districts, to settle for themselves whether that interest should be protected and cherished, or be left to languish, at their will; but under pains and penalties they have been required to provide for the support of schools. The government has regarded itself as having an interest at stake in this matter, no less important than even that of self-preservation. Nor would the interests of self-preservation allow the prosperity and advancement of our common schools to be *coldly* cared for. For who would undertake to tell how much of ignorance is compatible with the preservation of freedom? And what people would madly hazard the experiment of settling this question in practice by attempting to see how near they might safely approach to the verge of ruin—instead of aiming to keep aloof from the line of danger?

But it is not merely as a means of preserving her existence and her freedom that the State has made it a distinct part of her

policy to cherish the cause of education, and make the support of schools an obligation binding upon all her citizens. The truth has been grasped, and, to a good degree, appreciated, that the substantial interests and happiness, even of a few, cannot be effectually promoted and secured, unless all are competently educated. It has been understood that it is unsafe to be exposed to the contaminating effect of surrounding vice and ignorance, lest even virtue itself should be corrupted by their poisonous influence. And equally well has it been understood, though it might be deemed a subordinate consideration, that privation of intellectual enjoyment must ensue, and gathering darkness by slow degrees settle down upon the soul—however enlightened that soul may once have been—when no ray of light is reflected from souls around. No matter, then, whether the State could survive such a condition as has been supposed, and still live and linger on in darkness and degradation—there could be no object worth its existence if it be not to guard and protect its citizens from results like these. Indeed, that state which would attempt to guard the *flocks* of its citizens against contagious diseases, yet leave their *children* exposed to those subtle influences which are rife for corrupting the heart, wherever ignorance prevails, would do well to exchange the objects of its care.

But there is little danger that the main truth, that education is a matter of deep public concern, will be called in question. The greater danger is, that we should forget the breadth and extent of this truth; and thus fail to guard and cherish an interest on which all other interests so much depend, with that watchful, assiduous and unwearied care, to which, in view of its controlling power over our prosperity and happiness, it lays so just, so high and commanding a claim. Be it then our purpose to guard against this danger, and to guard the sacred charge committed to our hands with that unwavering fidelity and watchfulness which a constant remembrance and full appreciation of its importance, would demand of us as legislators and as men.

All which is respectfully submitted.

HORACE EATON,

*State Superintendent of Common Schools.*

Montpelier, November 6, 1917.





TABLE B.

## ATTENDANCE

ON

## WINTER SCHOOLS.

## COUNTIES.

	No. of legal scholars attending sch.	No. of children of legal school age.	No. of scholars that attended school.	No. not of school age that attended.	Per cent. of legal scholars that attended school.	No. returns showing regularity of attendance.	No. of days schools were taught.	Av. No. days to each district.	No. that attended 70 days and upwards.	60 to 70.	50 to 60.	40 to 50.	30 to 40.	20 to 30.	10 to 20.	Less than 10.	Whole number attended.	Average attendance.	No. of days lost by irregular attendance.
Addison,	89	3994	2933	142	69.8	52	3789	72.8	264	437	328	207	138	104	115	83	1676	1146	231
Bennington,						89	6475	72.8	519	472	500	416	342	257	214	213	2933	1899	26.6
Caledonia,	94	3653	3227	258	81.3	112	7430	66.3	267	897	835	670	483	274	245	176	3847	2665	20.4
Chittenden,						58	4202	73.6	337	427	329	227	209	205	161	140	2035	1306	27.2
Essex,	10	458	445	40	84.0	22	1442	65.6	6	187	218	138	88	72	36	45	790	543	20.5
Franklin,	54	2956	2079	165	64.7	59	4428	75.0	384	502	401	292	201	169	159	125	2233	1480	25.3
Grand Isle,						15	1182	78.8	89	92	79	63	58	36	26	34	477	267	34.7
Lamoille,	66	2379	2268	190	87.3	66	4529	69.0	234	579	546	279	257	148	133	90	2268	1605	20.3
Orange,	162	5533	4881	391	81.1	162	10799	66.6	444	1542	859	742	505	308	253	228	4881	3596	17.5
Orleans,	92	3500	3393	259	89.5	92	6476	70.6	270	677	645	576	439	383	280	123	3393	2153	25.8
Rutland,	43	1734	1410	105	75.2	117	8817	75.3	719	654	633	480	376	292	286	217	3657	2320	27.5
Washington,	63	2454	2166	216	79.4	86	5678	66.0	351	656	603	446	322	206	140	126	2850	2097	17.5
Windham,	65	2288	2094	155	84.7	123	8275	67.8	183	1130	927	564	420	247	220	168	3768	2744	19.4
Windsor,	92	3798	2948	265	70.6	93	6492	60.8	266	845	563	465	276	211	233	140	2999	2020	22.9
	830	32747	27844	2186	78.6	1146	9097	74.66	5565	4116	2912	2501	1906	3789	2584	1906	3789	2584	23.4

TABLE C.	WAGES, AGE OF TEACH- ERS, SEASONS TAUGHT, NO. PUPILS IN VARIOUS STUDIES, &C.	COUNTIES.
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COUNTRIES.		No. male teachers.	No. female teachers.	Wages paid male teachers.	Wages paid female teachers.	Average per month paid male.	Average per month paid female.	Average age of teachers.	Average No. seasons taught.	No. classes in schools.	Av. No. classes in each school.	No. Pupils in Alphabet.	Reading and Spelling.	Geography.	Arithmetic.	English Grammar.	History of United States.	Pennanship.	Higher Branches.	Schools reported that have a black-board.	Have Maps or Charts, &c.	Have other apparatus.
Addison,	59	43	16	\$1936	\$866	\$13 75	\$6 91	22.0	4.2	623	11	92	1046	505	920	328	42	991	108	49	7	2
Bennington,	89	67	23	2954	593	13 48	6 52	23.3	1.4	1275	14	152	2808	1023	1601	533	61	1470	163	73	15	3
Caledonia,	112	84	30	3004	674	11 53	7 39	21.4	3.4	1283	12	188	3202	1106	1897	825	98	1998	249	92		
Chittenden,	58	43	15	1919	341	13 34	6 78	22.6	5.4	630	11	131	1975	476	953	367	46	1008	88	46	2	5
Essex,	25	17	9	633	151	12 59	5 60	22.5	2.0	266	11	43	745	182	355	156	15	366	50	18		
Ffranklin,	58	37	21	1514	419	11 55	5 85	22.4	4.7	748	13	143	2434	712	1051	522	54	1251	150	49	2	
Grand Isle,	11	9	3	416	103	12 90	9 40	22.1		176	16	24	473	139	236	125	14	279	40	10	1	
Lamoille,	66	34	32	1247	692	11 70	6 87	22.4	5.2	773	12	100	2093	633	1004	550	13	1181	120	54	3	1
Orange,	162	115	50	4195	927	12 05	6 13	21.1	4.1	2160	13	184	4003	1476	2560	1232	224	2462	467	154	1	5
Orleans,	92	63	29	2488	560	12 45	6 02	22.8	5.2	878	10	120	3006	710	1587	621	72	1720	141	67	9	1
Rutland,	123	88	40	3884	880	12 67	6 37	23.7	4.7	1207	10	203	3519	1064	1988	637	116	1976	243	113	10	3
Washington,	86	62	25	2379	495	12 79	6 60	23.2	5.9	988	11	121	2746	780	1549	634	44	1607	199	75	11	2
Windham,	123	77	47	3159	1144	13 30	7 96	21.4	1.8	1279	10	147	3927	1385	2575	923	50	1984	210	116	7	4
Windsor,	121	75	46	3062	886	12 87	6 07	23.0	4.7	1591	13	155	4182	1267	2770	1036	137	2249	435	125	9	2
	1190	814	336	32795	8231	12 64	6 74	22.4	1.7		12	1803	36759	11458	21046	8459	986	1954	12745	1041	90	28

## APPENDIX.

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### EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, ETC.

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#### *From Report of Superintendent for Essex County.*

In regard to the government of schools, I am happy to say, there has been generally a visible change for the better. It is becoming more what it ever should be, firm, steady and affectionate. There is, however, still an opportunity for improvement. Another change also is being effected, relating to the order and neatness of rooms. This change has been more visible in the summer schools. Not only have the rooms been kept clean; but both the apparel and books of the children were in place. Of this change I cannot speak in too high commendation, when its influence upon the future character and habits of the children is contemplated. Neatness and order are just as essential in the school-room as in the kitchen or parlor. Habits are often, no doubt, formed in the school, which affect the character of the child through life. The vast influence which teachers exert upon the young immortals committed to their care, in moulding their characters, and in forming their habits of taste and love of order, should lead them to an earnest purpose to put forth the right kind of influence.

As it respects the qualifications of teachers, there is a growing improvement. Still, there are those employed as teachers, though not examined, who are wholly incompetent to their station. Too many seek the employment, I am afraid, as a mere matter of pecuniary profit; while others seek it as a means of doing good. Such love their employment, and succeed well in it. There is one fault common with almost every teacher—the want of a more practical mode of teaching. Very few seem in any manner to comprehend the great importance of this to the elevation of the schools, and the highest interest of the scholars. The power of invention is a qualification exceedingly desirable in every teacher. No teacher can succeed well in his business



who has not this power, or having it fails to use it. The good teacher will labor to introduce into his school as much of variety as shall be necessary to keep the mind awake, and the attention of his pupils constantly excited. This never can be effected by one uniform course from day to day.

The mode of teaching Geography and Grammar, no less than Spelling and Reading, might be varied with interest and profit. I have been surprised that so little use is made of the black-board in teaching these sciences. I have no hesitation in saying that more accurate practical knowledge of these sciences might be imparted in one week, by the right use of the board, than is imparted by the ordinary mode of teaching them, in three.

To effect the change desirable in the mode of teaching—that is, to render it more practical, I am aware that teachers must have far greater practical knowledge, and therefore much more practical training for their business. To render our district schools any thing what they should be, there is needed a class of well-trained, thorough-going, practical teachers; a class who design to pursue the employment as a profession for life; as a means of usefulness, and not as a matter of mere pecuniary gain.

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*From Report of Superintendent for Chittenden County.*

It has been my practice in all the visits I have made to spend a little time in hearing the classes in school, and observing the various methods of teachers in conducting their schools. If I could suggest an improvement to the teacher, when alone with him, I have taken the liberty to do it. I have spent some little time, when I could spare it, in putting general questions on Geography, Grammar, and especially upon the elements of our language and the figures and significant marks in the Spelling-book. It has been one object with me to create in the minds both of teachers and pupils a feeling that there is much, very much, contained in the Spelling-book which it is desirable they should know. And here I may observe that it has generally been manifest, that the first principles which are laid down in the first book that we place before our children, have been greatly neglected. In many cases in the higher branches the schools have appeared well.

The deficiency in books of uniformity has introduced quite too many classes in schools, and much of the time and labor of the teacher are bestowed to no profit. If instead of *one* we might have *six* in a class, it would put into the hand of the teacher at least twice the power to benefit his school in a given time. At a convention of superintendents last Fall, the recommendation of books by the State convention, was adopted, with the addition of

some few books, among which were the Bible and Testament.\* But however important that our schools should be supplied with suitable books, of a kind that will aid the teacher in classing his school, still I have found it difficult to accomplish a change at once. This difficulty does not arise from opposition on the part of teachers or people; but from the nature of the case it must take time and skill to bring about this change without giving occasion to opposers of the State regulations to arm themselves against the law. I am very sure that good has already been accomplished by the measures that have been put in operation to awaken an interest in the public mind on the subject of common schools.

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*From Report of Superintendent for Caledonia County.*

Our late school law is operating well. The good it has effected is not very palpable, or the changes it has wrought very marked. Nor was this to be expected. In a great moral enterprise, the reaper is never permitted to follow *immediately* upon the steps of the sower. The seed must germinate, and generally it is of slow growth. Unseen influences must operate for a time before visible effects are looked for. I think the law has accomplished, in the time and circumstances, all that any mind of intelligence and wise forecast could have expected. It has directed the attention of community to the *importance* of our schools, their *defects* and *wants*. School houses, which before were thought to answer *very well*, have been found, in many instances, to be *wholly* unsuited to the purposes of a school, and measures adopted for replacing them with others better adapted to study, to health and to comfort. I am happy to know of a good many instances where this has been done, and in several, I have been applied to for an approved *plan* of a school house.—Many things besides *warmth*, in regard to school houses, are claiming attention, which have formerly been almost wholly overlooked.

There has been a *deplorable* deficiency in respect to school houses in this county, not in *number*, but the arrangements, finish and appurtenances belonging to them. One Town Superintendent says in his report “there is not a *good* school house in town, while some of them are *altogether* unsuitable to be used for such a purpose.” One teacher says in his report he was obliged to wear his *over-coat* a good many of the forenoons, in order to keep at all comfortable: and another says they were

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\* NOTE.—It may not be generally recollected or understood, that at the first State Convention of County Superintendents, held in May, 1846, the Bible, to be used however, more especially for devotional purposes, was recommended to be used in schools. [STATE SUPERINTENDENT.]

seldom able to get to work before ten o'clock, in his school, on account of the *cold*, as they had a cold house and used *green wood*, which was furnished "by the scholar," and cut up by the scholars during recess. This state of things, which has been quite too common, is passing away. There are yet many bad houses, and destitute of out-buildings, but where this is the case it is generally *felt* to be not quite as it should be, and this feeling gives ground of hope that, before long, this serious evil will be remedied.

Some districts have employed teachers without examination, and some have even *preferred* such, but their number is small.— Nearly enough have been examined in this county by County and Town Superintendents to supply the schools in the county; as quite a large proportion of those examined in the spring, taught in the winter, without another examination. Most of those licensed were very well qualified to teach, yet quite a large number were but poorly qualified, who were licensed from the necessity of the case, as *well qualified* teachers are not yet to be found in sufficient numbers. Still, it was evident that many who had formerly taught and who would otherwise continue to teach, were deterred, by the examination, from offering themselves as teachers. Several instances came to our knowledge. And it was a matter of fact that teachers were more *scarce* last autumn than they had formerly been.

As a general thing, in the schools visited by myself and in those reported by Town Superintendents, there has been a very perceptible improvement. There have been, of course, individual exceptions, as there always will be; and these exceptions have been brought into notice and made more prominent, from the very fact that efforts were being made and expense incurred to improve them. And these exceptions were in some cases seized hold upon by those who were seeking objections to the law, and made to operate against it. "See! here is a *teacher*," they were ready to say, "who has been *examined* and *licensed*, and a school that has been visited by our *paid Superintendents*; and here is the result; a total failure! Before we were trammelled by this new law, we had good schools." And in many instances, doubtless, the *discovery* of the fact that the school *was a failure*, was owing to the operation of the law. Thus *one* important object of the law has been accomplished, viz, to direct attention to the schools, and bring out to notice what was faulty.

There has been a manifest improvement in several respects. Schools have been better managed, better order secured. This is the very general testimony of Town Superintendents. There have been *some*, but certainly *fewer* instances of total failure than in the schools of last year.



Then there has been an improvement in the *mode of teaching*. It has not been so much a mere *memoriter recitation* from the book. There has been more *waking up of mind*, and exciting of thought than formerly. In the method of conducting recitations there has certainly been an improvement. Instead of having classes scattered in their *seats*, as has too generally been the case before, they now are called together, and where there is no "recitation seat," (of which most of our old school houses are destitute,) they are required to *stand in order* on the floor, and answer *in turn*; and thus their *attention is secured*. It has been very gratifying in many instances, on visiting schools, to notice that suggestions had been successfully carried out, which had been made at examinations and on other occasions. And it has been a matter of gratification too, that teachers have *almost always* received suggestions kindly and thankfully.

There are many discouragements, which those engaged in this great and good work have to encounter, but surely a good beginning, with any prospect of ultimate success, however remote, must inspire one with zeal too strong and too warm to yield readily to discouragements. *Indifference* and opposition must be encountered for a time, but the law, if permitted to stand, will vindicate its own claims, and reward all efforts to give it efficacy and success.

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*From Report of Superintendent for Windsor County.*

In regard to the condition of schools in this county, I think they are decidedly improving in their character, although by no means as rapidly as we could desire. There is still a very great lack of interest upon the subject, but I believe the influence of the existing law is beginning to be felt; although there is still opposition to it. This however is, I think in some measure subsiding.

I have found the teachers generally better qualified than I anticipated. But the school-houses were in much worse condition than I expected. In this respect, however, there is an advancement towards a better state of things. The school-houses now building and recently built, are much better than the old ones ever were.

One of the greatest hindrances to the improvement of our Schools is the injudicious arrangement of the districts, by which, in order to bring the school-house to every man's door, they are rendered too small to be able to sustain schools of much value. And this evil is greatly increased by the general practice, even in very small districts, of employing male teachers a few weeks in the winter, instead of obtaining a good female teacher for a sufficient time to do their children some service. I do not know



how it may be in other parts of the State, but sure I am that in this county the condition of our schools would be greatly improved by employing many more female teachers in the winter schools. Some of the best conducted schools visited last winter were taught by females, and I believe that the schools in those towns in which the greatest proportion of female teachers have been employed are evidently in advance of those where male teachers are more generally preferred.

Another evil, in my opinion, is the practice of sending the teacher round the district to board, instead of providing comfortable accommodations near the school-house, where the morning and evening may be devoted, if need be, to preparation for the duties of the day.

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*From Report of Superintendent for Windham County.*

I have found the condition of the school-houses nearly the same as reported to you last year. A few new houses have been erected after better modes than their predecessors. A very neat, comfortable and convenient school-house was erected last year in one of the districts in the west parish of Westminster. In Whitingham three were built, one a two-story building to accommodate two schools. Two of these I have seen, and they are creditable to the districts that have erected them. In Stratton also one or two school-houses were built last year. I have, however, had the pleasure of witnessing one important change in the interior of quite a number of school-houses since my first visit to them. They have shown evident marks of the faithful use of the mop and the broom.

In short, I may say that as it regards the cleanliness of the houses, order and good behavior in the schools, interest among the children, improved modes of teaching and discipline, and accuracy and thoroughness of instruction, here has been a manifest change for the better in a very large majority of the schools that I have visited the present year; and it is but justice to observe, that in the schools taught by those who have attended our Institutes, the change has generally been most apparent and gratifying. And yet when we compare our schools as they are, with what they ought to be, I confess that a feeling of sadness and despondency comes over me. When will the people of Vermont awake to the importance of a right education of their sons and daughters! When will the State understand her highest interest!

I have been more and more impressed, every week and every month since my appointment to the office of superintendent, with the vital importance of having better qualified teachers. And yet those who have been employed to instruct our children, have

been as well qualified as could be reasonably expected, considering the destitution of the necessary means and facilities for qualifying themselves, and the small compensation allowed them for their services. But when the nobleness, the magnitude, the unspeakable importance of their work, is taken into the account, how meagre, how wretched has been their preparation for it!

One may visit schools, and make remarks, and suggest improvements, and endeavor to show a more excellent way; but how much can be done in an hour or half a day, to regenerate a teacher and a school! One may appoint a public meeting, and collect a few parents together, and make an address to them; but how much can an hour's talking do to remove hoary prejudices, to scatter the darkness of ages, to reform stereotype customs, to raise the dead! The only effectual mode, or *the* effectual mode to renovate our schools is to re-make, to re-mould our teachers. And this can be done only by bringing them together, awakening in their minds some just ideas of the grandeur of their calling, inspiring them with a holy enthusiasm for their work, and preparing them by a long and thorough training, intellectually and morally, for its faithful and successful performance.

In accordance with these views I have endeavored to do what little I could during the past year, to afford teachers a better opportunity than they had before enjoyed to prepare themselves for their work. Last autumn we had a Teachers' Institute in this town for four weeks. It numbered 57 pupils. Forty of these I believe, were employed as teachers last winter. In the spring we had an Institute at Putney for four weeks, numbering 40 pupils. Thirty of these I believe have been teachers the present summer. We had also an Institute for three weeks last spring at Wilmington, where 20 pupils attended, sixteen of whom, I think, have been teaching the present summer. I will not burden you with a detailed account of the manner in which these Institutes were conducted. The great object was to fit the pupils for teaching and governing schools. And I am quite confident, not only that their influence has been good, but also that it has not been small.

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*From Report of Superintendent for Lamoille County.*

A Teachers' Institute under my direction, aided by Mr. H. Gillam, from the State of New York, was opened in Morrisville on the third week of November and continued two weeks. The number of teachers in attendance was not large, the average being a little short of forty. The exercises of the Institute were such as to exhibit, as near as circumstances would permit, a *model school*. Every branch of study usually pursued in common schools received a share of attention during the forenoon

and afternoon sessions; and lectures and free discussion between the teachers in attendance, on the best modes of instruction, &c. occupied the evening of each day. The teachers who availed themselves of the opportunity of attending, seemed highly gratified with the means of improvement enjoyed; and I think evidence of their having profited by it was in most instances clearly exhibited in their schools, during the last winter and summer terms of school.

On the whole, the qualifications of teachers for their profession, as well as the interest awakened in some portions of the community, on the subject of our common schools, give some encouragement to hope for better days. I have endeavored as far as possible to awaken an interest on this subject in the minds of Town Superintendents, as well as other members of the community. But at present, the apathy of heads of families is the greatest obstacle to the progress of effort in this cause.—Town Superintendents, however, have, in this county, too many of them at least, manifested a great lack of zeal in the cause.—In one town\* the Superintendent went into every school district and delivered lectures, during the last winter, which have tended to increase the interest in that town, on the subject of schools, very much. But I am pained to say, that I believe this is the only instance in the county, in which all the schools of the town have received the visits of the Town Superintendent.

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*From Report of Superintendent for Grand Isle County.*

The Superintendent also made an effort to introduce Wickham's School Ledger. His plan was to have the districts purchase a copy, and thus it would remain a lasting, and nearly perfect history of the schools. In addition to the *historical* view of the matter, he believes that a record of the *recitations* of the scholars, faithfully kept by conscientious teachers, would do more to promote diligent study and thorough scholarship than any other means yet devised. In the Ledger a complete history of the progress of each scholar is recorded—a great convenience to teachers, succeeding each other; to parents, superintendents, visitors and scholars. He will not stop to enumerate all the beneficial results to be attained by a faithful use of this work. It has been introduced into *eight* districts, along with "Teachers' Certificates."

The Superintendent recommended a system of examination in which the scholars should be marked as to their attainments—a

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\* NOTE.—The County Superintendent ought to have named that town. We GUESS, however, it was STOWE. ARE WE RIGHT?

[STATE SUP'T.]



system which, if carried into effect, he believes would be very useful. In Alburgh, under the able superintendence of Hon. Giles Harrington, the Town Superintendent, assisted by several well qualified and public-spirited gentlemen, the work was well performed last winter. Some specimens of their reports are herewith sent. In other parts of the county the Town Superintendents heartily co-operated in this plan.

The schools in the county have been generally favored with *good* teachers, who have been ready to do their part well, if the means had been provided. As a class, they appear ready to co-operate with any who seek the improvement of schools.

The school-houses in the county are generally bad, although there are at least 9 or 10 that are very comfortable. The remainder are miserable—many so miserable that no good farmer would carry a comfortable conscience if he should provide no better for his horses.

As to apparatus, we must plead guilty of an entire destitution, except black-boards, and one set of Mitchell's Outline Maps. The people appreciate the importance of education. It is like proving an axiom, to attempt to convince them on that point; but as to the *ways* and *means*, they are too indifferent. If the children are not flogged to death, and the school-house is not turned inside out, and the teacher is not paid wages too high, no particular concern is awakened. If the lessons are only half-learned and half-recited, if a book has been passed over in a short time—enough.

Schools are to be reached, the writer is convinced, mainly through *teachers*; and it is believed that *more good* would result, if the Legislature should spend less for superintendence, and more for the proper instruction of teachers, and some perhaps for the supply of proper school apparatus—that is, if Vermont is too poor to *add the former to the latter*, which would be better still.

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*From Report of Superintendent for Washington County.*

When we consider the apathy—the absolute *death*, which, two years ago, possessed the minds of almost all in the community, in regard to the subject of common schools, and when we consider with many, to awaken them, from this stupidity was to create enemies and opposers—is it not rather a matter of surprise that we have accomplished so much, than that we have done no more?

But if we would succeed effectually and fully in the school enterprise the *people* must be more generally enlightened. The sentiment so often expressed by public speakers, of almost all classes,—“this *enlightened* audience”—if true in other respects,



is not in regard to this subject. And the greater the ignorance the more readily is this idea embraced, and the more firmly is it held. But we can have nothing to do with this flattering unctiousness. If an agent in this work takes it for granted that requisite knowledge is diffused, he will accomplish, I apprehend, but very little. His arguments, like the missiles of the great French Conqueror, when attempting to storm a castle the bulwarks of which were composed of mud, will be powerless. But when the *bitter truth* is fully understood—when the facts stand out clearly to view—the work of reform will commence in right good earnest. New and commodious school-houses, carefully selected and uniform text-books, requisite apparatus for illustration, thoroughly trained and well paid teachers,—in a word—Schools adapted to give our children the kind and amount of education which they need, and which would be creditable to civilization in the nineteenth century, will be seen as the glorious results.

In proof of the foregoing remark I offer the fact, that the *little* light we have been able to shed around this subject, during the past two years, is already producing an effect upon our school interests, in all these respects.

Although a large majority of the school-houses remain on the ground *where they were*, and their internal arrangements *as they were*, yet I apprehend there are *very few* which have not been affected beneficially in some respects. If nothing more, the house has, in some instances, been banked before the commencement of the winter school; in others, broken panes of glass have given place to whole ones; cracks have been stopped; plastering mended; loose clap-boards fastened; better wood furnished, and better stoves in which to burn it; and in most cases the houses have been better cared for and kept more clean.

In several instances the old school-house has undergone thorough repairs and its internal arrangements have entirely changed and been *very much improved*. In several cases, also, new and well-planned houses have been built, or are now in process of erection. Now, when a new house is to be built the committee are instructed to take pains to secure the latest and most improved plans. A much deeper interest is felt. It is beginning to be understood that it is very important to have a *right* house for schools—that upon this very much of their success depends.

#### TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

So far as a correct judgment can be formed by a simple experiment, much good may be realized, I think, from Teachers' Institutes. We held one the last spring, which continued but two short weeks; and yet in the judgment of many who attended

it, it was more valuable to them than any three months they had ever spent at an Academy or High School. The pupils were taken through a thorough *review* of all the branches to be taught in our common schools; and the best, or most approved methods of illustrating, explaining and teaching the several branches, were presented. An hour or more, each day, was devoted to the discussion of various topics, such as the organization of schools, government, &c. and to answering questions proposed by the pupils. Lectures were given each evening, on some topic connected with teaching, by gentlemen previously appointed. The expenses were paid by voluntary contributions. On the whole the Institute was highly satisfactory, and a universal wish was expressed that another might be held this Fall—for which arrangements have been made.

I may add, wherever a teacher from the Institute was found, you might see the impress of the Institute in the arrangements, general conduct, and modes of instruction adopted in the school—thus showing us that our labor had not been in vain.

In conclusion, I give it as *my conviction* that the present law is working much good. I believe, also, that this sentiment is gaining ground, in the community, every day. It is universally acknowledged that something was needed to give a new impetus to our schools, and it is very generally admitted that the last School Act has done this. That the law needs modifying, and may be materially improved, I do not doubt. But I hope the day is distant when it shall be repealed. If we are to fall back upon our old system, alas for our schools, and the priceless interests involved in them!

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*From Report of Superintendent for Orange County.*

In relation to no other department of government which involves an equal amount of expense, and the employment of an equal number of individuals, has there been such a prevailing spirit of disregard and remissness as in relation to the subject of Education. As it is admitted that the children of the State are its common property, it is also conceded that the wealth of the State is pledged for their protection from crime, misery and disgrace, by properly educating them. It is a common practice in other State matters, at least where the expenditure of money is involved, for the people to know *where* and *how* it is appropriated. But here, where *all the true* wealth of the State—its *youth*—with a great amount of its *glittering* wealth, too, is at stake, the matter has been passed by, and no accountability has been required. Successive generations of school children have entered and left the school, with no earnest inquiries on the part of the State, what would be their probable usefulness as members

of society—what their preparation for the stern duties of life ;—none whether the system and means in operation were such as were adequate to the accomplishment of so magnificent and benevolent an object as the education of *the whole people*, irrespective of rank or condition.

So great a variety of branches of study as are now introduced into the common schools, must be regarded as peculiarly unfortunate for their interests. The statute designates *six* which it requires to be taught, viz., Spelling, Reading, Writing, Geography, Arithmetic, and English Grammar. Probably no one would suppose that there might not be circumstances under which it would be right and proper that other and higher branches should be taught. But from the character of these schools, it was doubtless the design of the law that the primary object should be, thorough instruction in the elementary branches. The idea is absurd, that in addition to the multiplication of classes by twenty-five or thirty different kinds of books, we are to have Natural, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Chemistry, Rhetoric, Astronomy, Algebra, Surveying, Botany, Latin, &c. It were a thousand-fold better if not one of these branches were taught, since their natural, and almost inevitable tendency is to consume more than a fair proportion of the time of the school, presenting an obstacle to the study of the proper branches, and urging the pupils on to superficial attainments. Indeed we should almost conclude that advancing at our present rapid rate, the study of the Geography of the heavens will soon take precedence of the Geography of the earth. Reversing the order of things, we shall commence with objects the most remote, investigating other and more distant spheres, and be able readily and clearly to comprehend, by unassisted vision, the things with which we are more intimately connected. The young lady who informed her teacher that she would like to study *Bigotry*—meaning *Botany*—had doubtless imbibed the same *big* idea that has seized the minds of so many of our school children.

No one would rejoice more heartily than myself to see the scholars of our common schools enjoying equal advantages with those in the Higher Schools ; acquiring a knowledge of the sublime and beautiful science of Astronomy, of Philosophy in its various departments, of Geology, Botany, and the more solid branches, Algebra, Geometry and Surveying,—which may be not only practically useful, but furnish excellent mental discipline. But until we can secure more thorough and competent teachers for our schools, and at once advance the degree of our attainments, I should concur with the remark of an experienced teacher of a High School that while most of the scholars from the common schools are so deficient in the *elementary* branches, it



seems impracticable to advance to the *higher*. For the present, while in some instances elementary treatises on some of the branches referred to might be advantageously introduced into the schools, I earnestly hope their great and legitimate work will not be neglected—which is to lay the foundation of education in a thorough knowledge of first principles; to “teach the pupil how to learn,” and direct his attention to those branches which are requisite in the practical affairs of human life.

**No. 24.—AN ACT IN ADDITION TO, AND ALTERATION OF CHAPTER EIGHTEEN OF THE REVISED STATUTES, RELATING TO COMMON SCHOOLS.**

*It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont, as follows:*

SEC. 1. The school year, for all the purposes contemplated in this act, shall be taken as commencing on the first day of April in each year, and ending on the last day of March following.

SEC. 2. It shall be the duty of the district clerks of the several school districts in this State, to make the returns required in section ten of chapter eighteen of the Revised Statutes, between the fifteenth day of February and the first day of March, instead of making them in the month of January, as required in said section.

SEC. 3. It shall be the duty of each district clerk, in making out the returns specified in said section ten, to annex to the names of the heads of families, the names of the children; to certify the number of weeks a school shall have been taught by male and female teachers, respectively, including any such school, up to the close of the school year, as may have been contracted for in good faith and is expected to be kept; the amount of wages paid to male and female teachers, respectively, including wages to the close of the school year as before specified; the cost of board for teachers during the year, estimated in like manner; and also the cost of fuel, furniture, and other incidental expenses of the school, not including interest on buildings, amount paid for sites, for repairing buildings, or for fencing and improving grounds appurtenant thereto—which return shall be as near as may be in the following form.

Heads of families.		Names of children.		
A. B.		C. B.	H. B.	R. B.
G. H.		F. H.	W. H.	
No. of weeks school taught by male teachers,				3
No. by female teachers,				2
Amount of wages paid male teachers, (exclusive of board,)				\$
Amount paid female teachers,				\$
Cost of board for teachers, for year,				\$
Cost of fuel, furniture and incidentals,				\$

I certify the above to be true returns for district No. \_\_\_\_\_, as required by law.

Attest,

C. D. District Clerk.

SEC. 4. It shall be the duty of the selectmen of each town, in the month of March, annually, after they shall have made a division of the public money to the several districts as required by law, to leave with the



town clerk of the town, a written statement of the amount of money by them divided to each district during the current school year.

SEC. 5. It shall be the duty of the selectmen, in making their distribution of public moneys as required in section thirty two of chapter eighteen, aforesaid, to regard the returns of district clerks, as provided for in this act, as returns for the year preceding such distribution.

SEC. 6. It shall be the duty of the town clerk of each town, annually, in the month of March or on the first day of April, to prepare an abstract of the returns of the several district clerks, and deliver the same to the town or county superintendent of schools when called for—which abstract shall be as near as may be in the following form:

Dist's.	No.	No. chil-	Weeks	Weeks	Wages	Wages	Cost	Cost	Share
	heads of	dren of	taught	taught	paid	paid	of	of	of
	families	school	by	by	males.	females	board	fuel	public
No. 1		age.	males.	females.				&c.	money
No. 2									

The foregoing is a true statement of the statistics of the common schools in the town of \_\_\_\_\_ as obtained by me from returns of district clerks, made to me in February last, A. D. 18 \_\_\_\_.

Attest,

C. D., Clerk.

SEC. 7. The act entitled "an act in addition to chapter eighteen of the Revised Statutes, relating to common schools," approved Nov. 1, 1843, is hereby repealed.

Approved, November 15, 1847.

### *To District Clerks and Town Clerks:*

District Clerks will be guided by the foregoing Act, in making their annual returns. They will embrace the children of school age as they are on the 1st day of January; but the returns are not to be completed and delivered until between the 15th day of February and 1st day of March. The clerk will then make out a statement of the schools that have been taught from the 1st day of the previous April, up to the time of making the returns, including that portion of the winter school which has not been completed—whether one, two, or more weeks—provided it does not extend beyond the last day of March. In short, he is to state, in regard to the length of schools and their expense, what he in good faith *expects* will be true in regard to them, on the 1st day of April. If this return were made out in January, it would be more likely to prove incorrect, from interruption of the school by dismissal of the teacher, sickness or otherwise.

In regard to the item of board, the expense will probably vary, in different parts of the State and under different circumstances, from about one dollar to a dollar and a half, per week. It is not essential that the clerk should be very precise in estimating this item; but it should be stated as near as may be to the medium price in the vicinity.

Under the head of furniture and incidentals it will be proper to embrace expenses during the year for Maps, Globes, and any other apparatus of that kind used in the school, as well as furniture, in the ordinary meaning of the term.

The district clerk of a fractional district, must make returns to both those towns in which the scholars belonging to such district reside. But—supposing those towns to be A. and B.—he may, in making out his return for A. omit to put down the *names* of heads of families and scholars residing in B. but should state their *number*. And so, conversely, in making out his return for B. he may omit the *names* and give merely the *number* of families and scholars residing in A. In other respects the returns for both towns should be similar.

In the case of a fractional district the Town Clerk's abstract should embrace *all* the items named in the form prescribed—*provided* the school-house of such district be situated *in his own town*. If it be *not*, it will be sufficient to say "Attached to district No. — in —," and then put down under their appropriate heads, the number of heads of families and the number of scholars, together with the money appropriated for them, *in the town* for which the abstract is given. In short, each Town Clerk's abstract should give a statement only of the families, scholars, and money appropriated, together with an account of the schools kept—*within the limits* of his own town.

If the school-house be on the line between two towns, the *full* abstract—that is, the one which embraces the whole number of items—should be given in that town which originally established and numbered the district; or, if this be uncertain, in that town in which the greatest number of the scholars in the district reside.

The Town Clerk can make out his abstract any time in March, after the selectmen have divided the public money, and left with him their statement of such division.

As District Clerks are not furnished with the Acts of the Legislature, directly, the foregoing Act has been inserted more especially for their convenience, and should be permanently preserved by them.

H. EATON, *State Sup't.*

Enosburgh, Dec. 16, 1847.



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